

April 17, 2020

Dear Holy Archangel Michael's Serbian Orthodox Church Community in Hibbing, MN,

Today on this Most Holy and Great Friday we commemorate the earth-trembling event which forever changed the world, The Life-Saving Passion of Our Lord, God, and Savior, Jesus Christ.

In the world as it is today, we often hear the word passion. For example, "Johnny has a passion for skiing," or "hairstyling is her passion." In the Christian realm, we refer to our spiritual illnesses as passions.

However, the Passion of Our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ is to save us. In the abounding goodness and love of the Holy Trinity, Jesus Christ came to earth, suffered beatings, mockings, scourgings, crucifixion and ultimately death in order to resurrect us from the dead and destroy the hell we created. Our salvation is God's Passion.

So then how does it make sense to name our passions after the Lord's Passion? Our passions can be our cross, but we have to approach them properly. We have to crucify ourselves to our passions. Jesus was nailed to a large wooden Cross because the people he came to save rejected Him, oftentimes if we try to help ourselves, our passions reject us. So we must call upon the Lord and ask Him to help us thoroughly inspect ourselves, clarify the voice of our conscience, and deprive ourselves of what our passions think or want. Then, from this vantage point, we can begin to really see what Christianity is about. God came to earth and knew that the only way to resurrect humankind was for Him to humbly die in the flesh. We ourselves, who eat of His Body and drink of His Blood, cannot expect anything different. We especially cannot think that we are somehow going to skip the crucifixion and "know God." We have to first be crucified and then we can see the Light of the Resurrection. The only way to truly know God is to partake of His Body and Blood and live in imitation of Him. In this way, crucifying ourselves to the cross of our passions, we can experience the true life-saving Passion and Resurrection from the dead.

May He who endured spitting and scourging blows, the Cross and death, for the salvation of the world, Christ Our true God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.

With the blessings of God,
Father Constantine "Dean" Franck